



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Equipping & Encouraging Believers
In Prayer

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ISSUE 5

SPIRITUAL MOUTHWASH!!

Do you need a spiritual mouthwash? When I was growing up, I heard this warning numerous times, "Young man, I'm going to wash your mouth out with soap." I heard this when I spoke inappropriate or harsh words. My mother never actually washed my mouth out with soap (although she probably wanted to). Yet, she wanted me to know what I had said was sinful and that I needed to clean my speech up. It was a direct and vivid reminder that I needed to guard the words that I spoke.

Does your speech need cleaning up? Do you need a vivid reminder to guard your words? Lately God has been burdening me about sins of speech. He has been convicting me of the necessity of cleaning up our speech for our prayer lives. You may be thinking, "How are cleaning up our speech and prayer connected?" The tongue that you use to speak to God speaks to others. The lips that you use to praise God are used to communicate with others. The speech that you use to fellowship with God is also used to relate to others. You cannot separate your speaking to others from your speaking to God.

How can we use our tongues to talk with God and then slander and malign? How can we praise God from the same lips that we use to lie and flatter? How can we confess our sins with our lips only to gossip about and exaggerate the sins of others? Do you see the connection?

If we are going to pray with power, we must be diligent to clean up our speech. We

must seek to deal with the sins of speech along with developing righteous speech. We cannot expect to have power and effectiveness in prayer if we are not guarding and purifying our speech.

In this article, I want us to examine how to clean up your speech and develop righteous speech. We will look first at some biblical motivations for this. Then you will be provided with Scripture prayers to help you pray for this in your personal life. Finally, we will close with some practical pointers on how to pursue pure speech that honors God.

Biblical Motivations For Godly Speech

Why should you strive for godly speech? The Bible offers a variety of reasons for this. *First, God is holy.* God is absolutely pure. He is completely free from even the taint of sin. There is no imperfection in Him, including His Word. If you are going to approach Him, you must have clean lips, "LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart" (**Psalm 15:1-2**). God desires that your speech be characterized by truth and purity. There can be no compromise in this area. To approach this holy God in prayer means to clean up your speech and strive for truthfulness and purity in this area. It is the

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height of hypocrisy to use the same tongue that you lie, gossip, and flatter with to speak to the holy God.

Second, ungodly speech grieves the Holy Spirit. The Word of God declares, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (**Ephesians 4:30**). Sin grieves the Holy Spirit. But if you will look at the context of **Ephesians 4:30**, you will notice that sins of speech are particularly connected to grieving the Spirit (**Ephesians 4:29, 31**). When the Holy Spirit is grieved, He does not release His power into your life. He ceases to work in powerful and unique ways in your life. This is will be a major hindrance to your praying since it is only through Him that you are able to pray (**Galatians 4:6, Ephesians 2:18**). You should strive for purity of speech so that the Spirit will not be grieved and your prayers hindered.

Next, ungodly speech is a symptom of a deeper problem. Listen to the words of Jesus, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, and blasphemies" (**Matthew 15:18-19**). Jesus is teaching that ungodly words come from spiritually unhealthy hearts. When a person uses ungodly speech, it is a symptom of a deeper heart problem. God's will is for you to have a "clean heart" (**Psalms 51:10**). It is only through confession, repentance, and spiritual growth that this can happen. You must practice these things so that your heart will be changed and you will speak what is right, holy, and true.

Ungodly speech should not characterize the child of God's life. It is not fitting that a child of God should speak as the lost do. The Word of God says, "Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so" (**James 3:10**). A child of God should not use his speech for ungodly purposes. This is not why God saved him. God desires that the believer's speech glorify Him and build up others.

Finally, sins of speech are easily committed. The majority of sins that we commit are sins of speech. The Word of God says, "In the multitude of words sin is not

lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise" (**Proverbs 10:19**). Unless we are diligent to guard what we say, sinful speech will flow from our lips. Unfortunately, people do not view sins of speech in the same way that they do others. They do not feel that they are as "sinful" as perhaps other types of sin. Sins of speech are more "socially acceptable" than others. When you combine this attitude with the ease of committing sins of speech, you have an atmosphere where one can become tolerant of the evil use of speech. God hates all sin, including the sinful words that we speak. We cannot allow ourselves to become tolerant in this matter.

Scripture Prayers For Godly Speech

The following are Scripture prayers that you can pray for godly speech. You can use these to plead for a "spiritual mouth washing." These prayers are based on the Word of God. Because of this, you can plead these with confidence and expectation (**1 John 5:14-15**). You can use these for yourself or pray them for others who are struggling in this area.

Father, I pray in the name of Jesus that You would enable me to restrain my speech. Grant me the wisdom to know when to speak and what to say in the various situations of my life. Deliver me from speaking multitudes of words carelessly (**Proverbs 10:19**).

Father, Your Word declares that You hate lying lips. I ask in the name of Jesus that You would create in me Your hatred of lying. I pray that I would hate lying with all my being. Set me free from lying lips. I plead that You would empower me to speak the truth and not compromise with lying in any form (**Proverbs 6:17**).

Father, Your Word says that whoever spreads slander is a fool. Deliver me from the foolishness of loving and spreading slander. I ask that I would hate slander in any form. I plead that I would not compromise with this by

listening to or spreading slander (**Proverbs 10:18**).

Father, I pray that I would speak wisdom. When I open my mouth, I ask that I would say what is right and true. Teach me to say what is acceptable in various situations that I face on a daily basis (**Proverbs 10:31-32**).

Father, I plead that You would enable me to guard my speech. Equip me with the wisdom and power to control what I say. Deliver me from opening my mouth without considering what I am going to say (**Proverbs 13:3**).

Father, Your Word says that a soft answer turns away wrath. I ask in the name of Jesus that You would strengthen me to give a soft answer to those who agitate and anger me. I pray that I will speak in a kind and compassionate way to anyone who provokes me. Deliver me from the harsh words that will only stir up more anger in all who are involved (**Proverbs 15:1**).

Father, I pray that You will empower me to speak the right words at the right time. I ask that my speech would bless, challenge, convict, encourage, and help others. I plead that others would have joy in what I say. Grant me the wisdom and power to minister to others by what I say (**Proverbs 15:23**).

Father, I plead that I would speak the truth in love to others. Teach me how to provide the gracious and gentle rebuke to those who need it. Deliver me from the sin of flattery. I pray that I will not tell people what they want to hear. Give me the strength and wisdom to tell the truth even when it is painful or difficult (**Proverbs 28:23; Ephesians 4:15**).

Father, I ask in the name of Jesus that no evil speech will proceed out of my mouth. I pray that I would not use foul or abusive language. I plead that everything I say will be good and helpful so that my words will be an encouragement to those who hear them (**Ephesians 4:29**).

Father, I pray that my speech will be filled with grace, seasoned with salt, so that I may be able to answer unbelievers concerning my beliefs and my lifestyle (**Colossians 4:6**).

Father, I plead in the name of Jesus that You would enable me to bridle my tongue. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, I ask that I would exercise self-control over my speech. Father, I struggle with (a sin or sins of speech). Help me to conquer this sin (or these sins). Only You can help me overcome (**James 1:26**).

Father, grant me the spiritual maturity to control my speech and to use it for Your glory and the good of others. I ask that I will grow into the spiritually mature person that guards his/her speech and speaks what is holy and right (**James 3:2**).

Father, I ask You to create a clean heart within me. Renew a right spirit in me. Do these things so that I might speak those things that please You and encourage others (**Psalms 51:10**).

Practical Applications

The following are some practical pointers for growing in your ability to overcome sinful speech and to cultivate godly speech.

- ✓ *Guard your heart.* Be diligent to guard your heart from what you listen to and watch. If you listen to sinful speech, it will flow from you at some point. What goes in must come out. If you allow it to enter your heart, you will be speaking the same thing at some point (**Matthew 15:18-19**).
- ✓ *Develop the discipline of thinking before speaking.* This is a holy habit that needs to be cultivated in the life of every believer. Pray for the Holy Spirit to grant you the self-control to do this.
- ✓ *Deal immediately and harshly with any temptation to sinful speech.* When the thought enters your mind to say something that is sinful, deal with it

immediately and harshly. Do not toy with it or entertain it.

- ✓ *Learn the lesson of silence.* There are times when it is best not to say anything. It is okay if you don't always have something to say. It is better to be silent than to speak without thinking about what you're going to say.
- ✓ *Use prayer instead of slander.* When you hear slander or gossip, pray about the people involved. Instead of receiving it and passing it on, let it drive you to intercede for those involved. One of the ways that I have dealt with slander and gossip is by prayer. It helps me deal with it individually. And it has enabled me to help others. When someone begins to share gossip or slander, I will say to that person, "Why don't we stop right now and pray for the person or the people involved?" This has shown that I'm not willing to listen to slander and gossip and that we must pray instead of using slander and gossip.
- ✓ *Keep your distance from people that use sinful speech.* If at all possible, put distance between yourself and someone who is characterized by lying, gossip, slander, or any other sins of speech. This will help you to avoid having your mind and heart filled with these things. It will also protect you. Anyone who will gossip or slander others to you will do the same with others concerning you.
- ✓ *Memorize and meditate on the Word of God.* As you fill your mind and heart with the truth of God's Word, you will speak what is right, true, and holy. The more you fill your heart and mind with truth, the more you will speak truth and avoid the lies.

Standing Against Satan's Schemes For The Schools

The Bible tells us in **2 Corinthians 2:11** that Satan has schemes and plans that he has devised to accomplish his evil purposes. He longs to inflict harm, ruin, and destruction on

people and institutions. One of his main targets is the schools of our nation. He knows that if he can entrap and capture the hearts and minds of young people, he can influence and ruin the nation and future generations.

The only hope for our schools and the young people is intercessory prayer. We must plead with God for the destruction of Satan's schemes and plans against the schools and the kids. The following prayer guide is provided to help you stand against these schemes.

Father, Your Word declares that Satan is a liar. He is attempting to fill the minds of the students at _____ with those lies. I pray that the students at _____ will reject those lies and will believe the truth (**John 8:44**).

Father, Your Word says that Satan is a murderer. He will attempt to produce hatred and strife among the students at _____. He will strive to create a spirit of violence among the students. I pray that the students at _____ will forsake hatred, prejudice, and violence. Create a spirit of love and compassion in the students at _____ (**John 8:44**).

Father, Your Word states that Satan has conquered the lives of people; they live under his power. This is true of students at _____. I ask that the Lord Jesus Christ would set them free from his control. Deliver them from his evil grip through Jesus (**Acts 10:38**).

Father, Your Word reveals that Satan afflicts people with suffering and illness. I pray that You would grant healing and restoration to the students at _____. I pray that You would set the students at _____ free from any bondage that Satan has inflicted on their lives (**Luke 13:16**).

Father, Your Word teaches that Satan is an accuser. He longs to produce guilt and shame in the lives of the students at _____. I ask that they would turn to Jesus and receive

cleansing and healing from their guilt and shame (**Revelation 12:10**).

Father, Your Word asserts that Satan prompts people to do what is evil. I pray that You would bind this evil work of his against the students at _____. I plead that they will forsake evil and pursue what is right, good, and holy (**1 Chronicles 21:1**).

Father, Your Word says that Satan tempts people to sin. I ask that the students at _____ will say "No!" to temptation. I pray that they will seek You and strive to do Your will (**Mark 1:12**).

Father, Your Word declares that Satan strives to steal the Word of God that has been planted in a person's heart. I plead that You would deliver the students at _____ from this devious work of the enemy. I pray that the students at _____ will hear the Word and will respond to it with faith and obedience (**Matthew 13:19**).

Father, Your Word reveals that Satan is looking for people to devour. I ask that You would deliver the students at _____ from his destructive plans. I pray that they would come to Christ and live the abundant life that only Jesus can give (**1 Peter 5:8**).

Father, Your Word teaches that Satan wants to harm and ruin believers. I ask that You would strengthen and protect the believing students at _____ against this devious scheme. I plead that they would stand firm in Christ and His Word against all peer pressure (**Luke 22:31; 1 John 3:12**).

Father, Your Word says that Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers. I pray that You would open the minds of the unbelieving students at _____. I ask that they would hear and respond to the truth of Your Word. Cause them to see and understand the good news of Jesus Christ. I pray that they will turn to Jesus in true faith (**2 Corinthians 4:4**).

Father, Your Word teaches that Satan builds strongholds to oppose the truth of Your Word. I ask in the name of Jesus that every stronghold at _____ would be torn down. I pray that the truth of Your Word will fill _____. I plead that the students and teachers at _____ will know You and Your Word (**2 Corinthians 10:3-5**).

Praying With Your Body

Do you find yourself struggling to overcome complacency in your prayer life? One of the ways that you can get out of the rut of routine prayer is by changing your posture in prayer. You can add variety and freshness to your praying by praying in variety of ways. The Bible reveals that there are many postures for prayer. You might consider implementing some of these in your prayer for variety and change.

- ❖ *Bow to the ground when praying* (**Genesis 24:52; Exodus 34:8**).
- ❖ *Kneeling when praying* (**1 Kings 8:54; 2 Chronicles 6:13; Daniel 6:10; Luke 22:41; Acts 9:40; Acts 20:36; Acts 21:5**).
- ❖ *Praying while prostrate* (**Deuteronomy 9:25; 1 Chronicles 21:16; 1 Chronicles 29:20; Ezra 10:1, Job 1:20; Ezekiel 9:8; Matthew 26:39**).
- ❖ *Praying while sitting down* (**Judges 20:26; 2 Samuel 7:18; Nehemiah 1:4**).
- ❖ *Praying while standing* (**Genesis 24:12-14; Luke 18:10-13**).
- ❖ *Praying while looking toward heaven* (**John 17:1**).
- ❖ *Praying with your head bowed* (**Luke 18:13**).
- ❖ *Praying with your hands lifted toward heaven* (**Exodus 9:29; 1 Kings 8:54; 2 Chronicles 6:13; Psalm 63:4; 1 Timothy 2:8**).

Prayerwalking Your Church

A unique way to pray for your church is by prayerwalking the facilities. This is a simple

but powerful ministry that will yield fruit in time. You might consider it unusual to prayerwalk your church. Yet, there are some persuasive motivations for this.

- (1) *It enables you to saturate your church in prayer.* Prayerwalking your church will enable you to cover every aspect of your church's worship and ministry. It will provide you with the opportunity to cover your church consistently with prayer.
- (2) *It can renew your passion to pray for your church.* As you walk and pray through your church, it can ignite your intercession. It can stir your heart to faithful and fervent pleading for your body of believers.
- (3) *It can provide you with fresh insight to pray.* As you prayerwalk your church, it will bring to your heart and mind various requests to pray for your church. It puts you in the position to hear afresh and anew from the Holy Spirit concerning your church.
- (4) *It is an excellent way to introduce believers to prayerwalking.* Before they hit the streets, they can start learning the "how-tos" of this ministry at the church. Prayerwalking the church is a good way to get believers started in prayerwalking. By doing this, they can learn the basics and get used to praying on-site with insight. This can prepare them for prayerwalking in other places and areas.
- (5) *This can become a ministry that believers carry out.* You might consider developing teams that will prayerwalk your church on a consistent basis. These teams will rotate on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Each team will go through the church praying the Word and the insights that Holy Spirit provides. By doing this, you can saturate your church in prayer. This ministry will bear fruit in time.

The following are some suggestions on how to prayerwalk your church.

The front doors: Pray that people will sense and know the presence and power of God as they enter; plead that their hearts will be prepared to receive what God will speak in the worship services.

The pews: Ask that every person sitting in that pew will be touched and transformed by the power of God; pray for a deep work of the Spirit in each person in that pew.

The altar: Plead that people will seek God and experience His healing power at the altar; pray that people will repent and turn to God in faith.

The pulpit: Pray that the Word of God will be preached powerfully from the pulpit; ask that the worship leader and the pastor will be anointed and empowered to lead the church in worship and the Word.

The choir loft: Plead that the church will worship God in spirit and truth; ask that the worship services will be pleasing to God.

The piano and/or organ: Pray that people will be prepared to worship; ask that people will sing and worship from their heart; plead that the worship will not be a routine – simply going through the motions but an experience with God.

The baptistery or baptismal fount: Pray that people will come to Christ in true faith and confess Him before men; ask that your church will love and win the lost to Jesus Christ.

The Sunday School rooms: Plead that the people in the class will have a heart for the truth; pray that the people in the class will grow to maturity; ask that the teacher will be prepared and empowered to teach.

The fellowship hall: Ask that the church will grow in its fellowship; plead that there will be greater unity among the believers.

The nursery: Pray that the children in the nursery will be raised in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord; ask that they will turn to Jesus in faith and repentance.

The parking lot: Ask that many people will come and "park" their lives at your church; pray that God will fill the parking lot of your church with the cars of those who are seeking Him and His Word.

The church sign: Pray that your church will be a sign to your community of what God's power and grace can do.

These are only suggestions that can help you see the variety of ways that you can prayerwalk your church. These are offered just to help you get started. As you prayerwalk, you will receive many other insights that you can use to intercede for your church. When you faithfully prayerwalk your church, you will see fruit. You will see changes. Prayerwalk and cling to **Galatians 6:9!**

Praying For Your Pastor's Protection

October is Pastor Appreciation Month.

This month has been designated to show your pastor how much you care about and appreciate his/her ministry. I don't know of a greater way to do this than by praying for your pastor. The greatest gift you can give your pastor is by committing yourself to pray consistently for him/her.

One of the great needs of your pastor is protection. The demands and stress of ministry take their toll on your pastor. The enemy hurls his schemes and attacks at your pastor on a constant basis. The following prayer guide is offered to help you pray for his/her protection. In order to use this prayer guide, place your pastor's name in the blank and plead the truth of the Scripture.

Father, I pray that You would grant strength to _____. I ask that Your healing power would flow through him/her. Deliver him/her from any physical problems or illnesses that he/she is experiencing (**Exodus 15:26**).

Father, I ask You to grant emotional healing and strength to _____. You know the

hurts of his/her life and ministry; touch him/her in those areas. Heal the wounds that have been inflicted in _____'s life (**Psalms 147:3**).

Father, I pray that You would protect and deliver _____ from fear. I ask that _____ would know that You love him/her and will strengthen and encourage him/her (**1 John 4:8**).

Father, protect _____ from loneliness. I ask that the members of this church will love and minister to _____. Enable _____ to develop an intimate relationship with You. Cause to know that You will never forsake him/her (**Matthew 28:20**).

Father, I ask that You would drive discouragement from _____'s heart. I pray that _____ would be strong and steady, always enthusiastic about the Lord's work, knowing that nothing that _____ does for the Lord is ever in vain (**1 Corinthians 15:57**).

Father, You alone know the stress and pressure that _____ feels. Grant to _____ grace and mercy in abundance to deal with the stress and pressure that he/she feels (**2 Corinthians 1:3**).

Father, I pray that _____ will pursue sexual purity with all his/her being. I ask that _____ will have a godly, pure thought life. Empower _____ to overcome lust (**1 Thessalonians 4:3**).

Father, I ask You to supply all of _____'s needs. Pour out in abundance all that _____ needs. Deliver him/her from stress and worry concerning personal finances (**Philippians 4:19**).

Father, deliver _____ from the schemes and attacks of the enemy. Satan is a roaring lion seeking to devour _____. But I pray in the name of Jesus that _____ will escape every trap and every attack that the enemy throws at him/her. I plead that _____ will grow stronger and

more mature through these attacks (**1 Peter 5:8**).

Father, I ask that _____ would give him/her power and grace to deal with persecution. Help _____ to stand strong and to be faithful to You no matter what (**2 Timothy 3:12**).

Father, I plead that _____ would stand firm against gossip and criticism. Provide _____ with the grace and the power to receive fair criticism and to profit from it. Grant _____ the strength to forget about the unfair criticism and to move on (**Proverbs 17:10**).

Father, I pray that You would deliver _____ from spiritual complacency. I ask in the name of Jesus that _____ would hunger and thirst for You. I plead that You would continue to stir _____'s heart, molding and shaping his/her life and ministry. (**Psalm 42:1-2**).

We Need Your Help!

This is the sixth year of The Prayer Closet's existence. As I look back over the past six years, I marvel at how God has grown and worked through this ministry. It is utterly amazing to see what He has done. He deserves all the credit and glory for the growth and impact of this ministry.

God is continuing to grow this ministry. He is opening a variety of doors. We are producing materials to help believers and churches grow in prayer. We are working on the newsletter - its appearance and content. We are also working toward building a ministry facility where we can be more effective in ministry.

Yet, we need your help. We would appreciate your financial support. This ministry is based on the donations of believers and churches. In this month's issue of the newsletter, we have enclosed an envelope. Would you please consider sending a donation to help this ministry continue growing and impacting the world? We would also ask you to also consider making a monthly commitment of any amount that you choose. At this time, we have churches that have made The Prayer Closet part of their budget. Would you consider making The Prayer Closet a line item in your church's budget? The money that we receive will be used solely for ministry. Thank you for your consideration and kindness in this matter.



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